

# Commissioners in Action, Sept. 29

by MARIAN *McMahon*  
10-14-11

**LAKE COUNTY** - Lake County Commissioners Bob Aufdush, Dan Troy and Ray Sines meet at 10 a.m. most Thursdays, with some meetings at 2 p.m. on Tuesdays, in the Commissioners' Chambers on the fourth floor of the Lake County Administration Building, 105 Main St., Painesville.

All meetings are open to the public. Requests to address the government board may be made at any board meeting or presented to the Commissioners' Office by calling Amy Elasz at (440) 350-2753.

There was a meeting Oct. 11. The next meeting will be Tuesday, Oct. 18 at 2 p.m.

At the Sept. 29 meeting, the following legislation was adopted:

## RESOLUTIONS: UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

- Resolution awarding a bid contract to HD Supply Waterworks, Ltd. for cold water meters for the Lake County Department of Utilities for residential and commercial customers.

- Resolution transferring appropriations from LCDU Sewer District Equipment and LCDU Sewer District Vehicles to LCDU Sewer District Vehicle Repairs and Supplies.

- Resolution certifying unpaid sewer and water sums to the Lake County Auditor.

- Resolution accepting the retirement resignation of David J. Ivans from his position of distribution maintenance IV, Lake County Department of Utilities, effective Sept. 30.

- Resolution accepting the retirement resignation of Keith Maddox from his position of systems maintenance IV, Lake County Department of Utilities, effective Sept. 30.

## COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE

- Resolution reclassifying Charles Sadar from the position of mechanic I to custodian II in the Lake County Buildings and Grounds Department, effective Oct. 3.

- Resolution changing the regular commissioners' meeting scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 13 to Tuesday, Oct. 11 at 2 p.m.

- Resolution declaring unused buildings and three parcels of real property located at 153 East Erie St., Painesville, 485 Riverside Dr., Painesville Twp., and 1250 Mentor Ave., Painesville Twp., no longer necessary for county purposes and authorizing the advertisement for bids for the public sale of same, according to sections 307.09 and 307.10 of the

Ohio Revised Code no minimum bid.

"These are properties owned by the county. One is the old garage diagonal from the (Lake County) Fairgrounds. One is the juvenile group home and the other is the old Dworkin & Bernstein (attorneys) building," said Commissioner Dan Troy.

He noted the commissioners had to declare the properties unnecessary for county use. The properties cannot be marketed. They can only be sold at public auction or through sealed bids, which is the method the county selected.

Sines said the economy was not the best for selling real estate, but the county could refuse all offers if they were deemed insufficient for the value of the properties.

- Resolution approving plans and specifications and authorizing advertising for bids for the roof replacement project for the Lake County Victim Assistance Building at 47 North Park Place with a bid opening date of Oct. 19. The project is to be completed by Nov. 25.

## FINANCE DEPARTMENT

- Resolution approving payment of bills as listed on the commissioners' approval journal in the amount of \$836,731.15.

- Resolution approving purchase orders as listed on the commissioners' purchase order approval journal in the amount of \$1,193,054.93.

- Resolution increasing and decreasing appropriations for various general and non general fund accounts.

- Resolution transferring cash and appropriations within various general and non general fund accounts.

## DEPARTMENTAL

### REPORTS

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

- North Perry resident Craig Vrabec asked the commissioners about what plans the county has to deal with the continuing downturn in the economy. With more people losing their jobs and needing help, what was the county going to do, he asked.

Board President Ray Sines told him working on the county budget was an ongoing process.

Troy explained the county did not fund Lake County Job and Family Services; it is a state agency.

The county budget has declined from what was about \$62 million some years ago to about \$52 million for next year due to revenues decreasing such as real estate taxes which are expected to drop another 10 percent in the next re-evaluation.

Troy continued to explain that the county was mandated by state law to fund certain things such as the

Board of Elections, the Prosecutor's Office, legal expenses for indigent defendants, the courts and more. As such, the commissioners were restricted on where and how to cut spending more than city governments were.

"I've always said, 'county government is not a true local government because we don't have the discretion cities do,'" Troy said.

Vrabec asked if they were permitted to raise sales taxes by 0.25 percent.

He was told they did have the ability to do that, but they stressed they had no intention of increasing any taxes unless they could not meet the statutory funding requirements.

"My opinion is you don't raise taxes in an environment where people are struggling; it makes it even more difficult," Sines said, "so we've made cuts. We've made adjustments in this budget to live within our means like every family, like every business and every individual has had to this last several years."

Troy said the Lake County commissioners in 1969 instituted a 0.5 percent sales tax for the county. Lake County commissioners have never increased that amount, although most counties have raised the percentage to the maximum allowed by law, which is 1.5 percent.

During the second public portion, Vrabec asked what impact there would be on the county if Issue 2, concerning Senate Bill 5 (regarding public unions) remains law or is eliminated by a majority public vote.

Commissioner Bob Aufdush explained the county health care plan is self-funded and not part of the union contracts, so there would be no impact in that regard either way. Concerning bargaining, he said the relationship with the unions has always been "friendly."

Troy said, overall, SB 5 really would not affect Lake County, apart from third party fees, no matter which way the vote went. In his opinion, since management had agreed to what the unions bargained for in the contracts, it was management turning to the legislature to rescue them from those contracts. He did note he felt some change was needed, but not as defined by SB 5.

Sines said he felt both sides were exaggerating the financial impact of SB 5 and the labor issues should have been dealt with individually, not in one piece of legislation.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

The commissioners adjourned to executive session for personnel interviews.